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REPORT OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS ON ITS FIRST SESSION

(New York, 1-3 October 1997)

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I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

A. Draft decision

1. The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decision:

Future sessions of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

The Economic and Social Council approves the recommendation of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests that it carry out its work in three substantive sessions of up to two weeks each; that it establish in-session working groups, no more than two to be scheduled to meet simultaneously; and that the dates and venues of future sessions be as follows:

Session	Dates	Venue
Second session	June or August 1998	Geneva*/New York
Third session	February/March 1999	Geneva
Fourth session	February/March 2000	To be determined

B. Decision brought to the attention of the Council

2. The following decision adopted by the Forum is brought to the attention of the Council:

Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Forum

The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests decided to invite the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) to attend its sessions as an intergovernmental organization with the status of observer.

II. PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS AND DATES AND VENUE OF FUTURE SESSIONS

3. At its 1st to 4th meetings, on 1 and 2 October 1997, the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests considered items 3 and 4 of its agenda concurrently. It had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work and organizational modalities for the ad hoc open-ended Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/2).

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* Taking into account the offer of the Government of Switzerland and subject to further technical clarification.

4. Statements were made by the representatives of the United States of America, Venezuela, Indonesia, Japan, Peru, Brazil, Australia, India, China, Canada, Switzerland, Papua New Guinea, Guyana, Colombia, the Philippines, Germany, Sweden, Finland and France.

5. Statements were also made by the observers for Nigeria, Turkey, the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), New Zealand, Costa Rica, Norway, Luxembourg (on behalf of the States members of the European Union), Algeria, Malaysia, Denmark and Austria.

6. The Forum considered suggestions regarding its future activities as contained in the report of the Secretary-General (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/2).

7. The Forum stressed the need for a focused and balanced approach to its work in relation to the mandate contained in the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, which was adopted by the General Assembly at its nineteenth special session and reconfirmed by the Economic and Social Council in resolution 1997/65 of 25 July 1997. The Forum emphasized the need to build on the positive results achieved by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and that the focus should be on implementation of the proposals for action and on those issues on which international consensus had yet to be achieved. In the light of these considerations, the Forum decided that the work of its forthcoming sessions should be conducted according to the following interlinked categories, which should receive balanced intergovernmental attention:

CATEGORY I

Promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forest

(a) Promote and facilitate implementation. For example, consider the launching of programmes by countries, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and major groups to implement all proposals for action developed by IPF; consider appropriate mechanisms for the mobilization of financial resources, institutional and human resources and capacity-building, with particular attention to the role of women;

(b) Monitor progress in implementation. Consider the mechanisms, process and format for reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress; and assess progress in implementation, inter alia, by countries, United Nations agencies, other international organizations and major groups, including the private sector, and indigenous people, forest dwellers, forest owners and local communities.

CATEGORY II

Considering matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process

(a) Consider matters left pending on the need for financial resources. Consider urgently the following options for action, as contained in paragraph 68 of the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests on its fourth session (E/CN.17/1997/12):

(i) To urge the establishment of an international fund to support activities for sustainable forest management;

(ii) To pursue action to enhance funding in other ways, inter alia, by inviting the United Nations Development Programme and the Bretton Woods institutions, together with other relevant international organizations, to explore innovative ways both to use existing financial mechanisms more effectively and to generate new and additional public and private financial resources at the domestic and international levels in order to support activities for the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests;

(b) Consider matters left pending on trade and environment. Analyse the mutually supportive roles performed by international trade and sustainable forest management and, in that context, issues related to non-discriminatory international trade in forest products from all types of forests, including the role that tariff and non-tariff barriers may perform in relation to sustainable forest management, certification issues where relevant and improved market access, taking into account the needs of developing countries, in particular those of the least developed among them. Consider the question of the relationship between obligations under international agreements and national measures, including actions imposed by subnational jurisdictions, recognizing that those matters are also considered in forums whose primary competence is to address trade issues; the relative competitiveness of wood versus substitutes; valuation; and market transparency and the related issue of illegal trade in wood and non-wood forest products;

(c) Consider matters left pending on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management. Examine ways of promoting, facilitating and financing access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how to developing countries on favourable terms, including concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account chapter 34 of Agenda 21[1] and paragraph 11 of the Forest Principles,[2] and examine appropriate mechanisms to effect such access and transfer; consider technologies and technical knowledge, including extension services for local sustainable forest management, as well as enhanced technology development, transfer and application to improve the utilization of wood and non-wood forest products and services, with special attention to wood as an energy source and to the role of women;

(d) Consider other issues arising from the programme elements of the IPF process needing further clarification. Consider, inter alia, analysis of underlying causes, in particular international causes, including transboundary economic forces of deforestation and forest degradation, taking into account the historical perspective and the pressures exerted on forests by other sectors, notably agriculture, in the quest for food security; traditional forest-related knowledge (TFRK), consistent with, inter alia, the terms of the Convention on Biological Diversity; valuation of forest goods and services; assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas; forest conservation, including conservation in protected areas; identification and definition of global and regional research priorities, taking into account national priorities; the use and application of the range of economic instruments, including tax policies and land tenure arrangements as a means of promoting sustainable forest management; and future supply and demand of wood and non-wood forest products and services;

(e) Consider forest-related work of international and regional organizations. Further examine the forest-related work being carried out by international and regional organizations and under existing instruments in order to identify gaps and overlaps.

CATEGORY III

International arrangements and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests

Identify elements, build a global consensus and engage in further action. The Forum should also identify the possible elements of and work towards a consensus on international arrangements and mechanisms, for example, a legally binding instrument on all types of forests. The Forum will report on its work to the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1999. Based on that report and depending on the decision taken by the Commission at its eighth session, the Forum will engage in further action on establishing an intergovernmental negotiation process on new arrangements and mechanism or a legally binding instrument on all types of forests.

Dates and venue of future sessions

8. The Forum recommended to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of a draft decision concerning the dates and venue of its future session (for the text of the draft decision, see sect. I.A above).

Schedule of work

9. The schedule of work set out below is recommended on the understanding that all categories are open for discussion until the Forum's fourth session.

Category/programme element	Second session	Third session	Fourth session
		Preparation of IFF progress report to CSD (seventh session	Preparation of IFF report to CSD (eighth session)
CATEGORY I			
I.a. Promote and facilitate implementation	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Information/update	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)
I.b. Monitor progress in implementation	Background discussion	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)
CATEGORY II			
Consider matters relating to:			
II.a. The need for financial resources	Background discussion	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)
II.b. Trade and environment	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Information/update	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)
II.c. Transfer of technology	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Information/update	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)

Category/programme element	Second session	Third session	Fourth session
II.d. Issues needing further clarification	Background discussion	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)
II.e. Forest-related work of organizations	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Information/update	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)
CATEGORY III			
Identify elements, build a global consensus and engage in further action	Background discussion	Substantive discussion Preparation of draft conclusions and proposals for action	Consideration for report to CSD (eighth session)

CSD: Commission on Sustainable Development
IFF: Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

Modalities of work

10. Following the guidance as regards modalities of work provided by the Commission on Sustainable Development in its decision establishing the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, which was approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 1995/226, intergovernmental organizations and the full range of non-governmental organizations and other groups may participate as observers in the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on an open-ended and fully participatory basis, in accordance with the rules of procedure and practice of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

11. The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests will draw, inter alia, on the resources and technical expertise of the informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests and other appropriate organizations within and outside the United Nations system, as well as secretariats of relevant conventions, with appropriate contributions from non-governmental organizations. The Forum encouraged inputs from major groups in all the activities in its programme of work.

12. Considering the complexities of the topics included in its mandate and in view of the fruitful contributions made by a large number of government-sponsored initiatives in support of the IPF process, the Forum welcomed any

proposals made by Governments to organize expert meetings or to conduct studies in support of the Forum's work and welcomed in particular regional approaches. The Forum suggested that all countries and organizations planning or proposing to organize meetings or expert consultations relevant to the work of the Forum should be guided by the following principles:

(a) Such meetings or expert consultations should be informal in nature;

(b) They should strive to be in full conformity with the tasks assigned to the Forum;

(c) They should be of an open-ended, transparent and participatory nature;

(d) They should strive for balanced representation from countries, reflecting a range of interests and views of all interested parties; particular attention should be paid to the participation of women experts;

(e) They should ensure that the timing and topic under consideration harmonize as far as possible with the schedule of work of the Forum;

(f) The organizers, in the course of their preparations, should consult with the Co-Chairpersons, the Bureau and the secretariat of the Forum, as appropriate;

(g) Such meetings or expert consultations should be invited to prepare a report to be presented to the Forum.

13. The Forum welcomed the offers made by the governments of Austria and Indonesia jointly, Costa Rica and Germany to host intersessional meetings in support of its deliberations.

14. The results of such activities would provide valuable expert input to the work of the Forum. However, any decisions on policy recommendations to be presented to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eighth session would rest with the Forum itself.

Secretariat and financial support for the Forum

15. Bearing in mind the fact that the Forum's secretariat is supported by voluntary extrabudgetary contributions, the Forum appealed to Governments and international organizations to consider supporting its work through voluntary contributions. The Forum welcomed the pledges made and intentions expressed by some Governments during its first session to provide financial support for the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests process.

III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE FORUM ON ITS FIRST SESSION

16. At the 5th and 6th meetings, on 3 October 1997, the Forum had before it the draft report on its first session (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/L.1) and an informal paper containing chapters on the programme of work and organizational modalities for the Forum and the dates and venue of future sessions.

17. At the 5th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Japan, Australia, the United States of America, the Philippines, Brazil, Colombia, Canada, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Papua New Guinea, Venezuela, India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Switzerland and Peru.

18. At the same meeting, statements were made by the observers for Luxembourg (on behalf of the States members of the European Union), the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Malaysia, Ecuador and Austria. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations also made a statement.

19. At the 6th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of Indonesia, Switzerland, Venezuela, Australia, the United States of America, Canada, the Philippines, Brazil, Papua New Guinea, India, Japan and China and the observers for the United Republic of Tanzania (on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China), Luxembourg (on behalf of the States members of the European Union), New Zealand, Costa Rica, Nigeria and Malaysia.

20. The Forum then adopted the report on its first session as contained in document E/CN.17/IFF/L.1 and the informal paper.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS

A. Opening and duration of the session

21. The Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development held its first session from 1 to 3 October 1997, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/65. The Forum held 6 meetings (1st to 6th meetings).

22. The session was opened by the temporary Chairperson, Ms. Monika Linn-Locher (Switzerland).

B. Attendance

23. The session was attended by representatives of 30 States members of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Observers for other States Members of the United Nations, representatives of organizations of the United Nations system and observers for intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations also attended. A list of participants is contained in annex I to the present report.

C. Election of officers

24. At its 1st meeting, on 1 October, the Forum elected, by acclamation, Bagher Asadi (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Ilkka Ristimäki (Finland) Co-Chairpersons. It also elected, by acclamation, Yevgeny Kuzmichev (Russian Federation) and Charles Essonghe (Gabon) Vice-Chairpersons.

D. Agenda and organization of work

25. At its 1st meeting, on 1 October, the Forum adopted its provisional agenda contained in document E/CN.17/IFF/1997/1 and approved its organization of work. The agenda was as follows:

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Programme of work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests.

4. Dates and venues of future sessions.

5. Other matters.

6. Adoption of the report of the Forum on its first session.

E. Documentation

26. The documents before the Forum are listed in annex II to the present report.

F. Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Forum

27. At its 1st meeting, on 1 October, the forum considered the question of the participation of intergovernmental organizations in its work. It had before it a note by the Secretariat entitled "Participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the open-ended ad hoc Intergovernmental Forum on Forests" (E/CN.17/IFF/1997/3), in which the Secretariat recommended to the Forum that the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) be invited to attend the sessions of the Forum as an intergovernmental organization with the status of observer.

28. At the same meeting, the Forum approved the recommendation (see sect. I.B above).

Notes

[1] Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992, vol. I, Resolutions Adopted by the Conference (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

[2] Ibid., annex III.

Annex I

ATTENDANCE

Australia	John Crighton, Gary Dolman, Rod Holesgrove, Geoffrey Tooth, Tony Bartlett, Amanda Hawkins
Bolivia	María Estela Mendoza
Brazil	Enio Cordeiro, Antonio Fernando Cruz de Mello, Eduardo Carvalho
Canada	David Drake, Denis Chouinard, Rosalie McConnell, Denyse Rousseau, Fred Johnson, Richard Baerg, Ken Macartney
China	
Colombia	Julio Londoño, Bibiana Vargas, Marta Inés Galindo
Egypt	Enayat Mohamed Abdelaziz
Finland	Ilkka Ristimaki, Birgitta Stenius-Mladenov, Taisto Huimasalo, Markku Aho, Leena Karjalainen-Balk, Erja Fagerlund, Heikki Granholm, Soili Kangaskorpi
France	Janie Letrot-Hadj Hamou, Bernard Chevalier, Philippe Delacroix
Gabon	Charles Essonghe
Germany	Ulrich Hoenisch, Hagen Frost, Rainald Roesch, Christian Mersmann Wilfried Koschorreck
Guyana	
India	
Indonesia	Makarim Wibisono, Arizal Effendi, Moch. Slamet Hidayat, Bagas Hapsoro
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Bagher Asadi
Japan	Hideki Ito, Takeshi Goto, Mayu Hagiwara, Yutaka Yoshino

Mexico	Gerardo Lozano, Ulises Canchola
Netherlands	J. Hoogeveen, A.P.M. van der Zon, P. Schütz, A.M.C. Wester
Papua New Guinea	
Peru	Amelia Torres, Italo Acha Puertas
Philippines	
Russian Federation	Yevgeny Kuzmichev
Slovakia	Miloslav Hettes
Sweden	
Switzerland	
Thailand	Apiwat Sretarugsa
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Weston, Peter Gooderham, Ian Symons, David Dunn, Andrew Bennett, John Hudson, Sheila McCabe, Scott Ghagan, Mike Dudley
United States of America	Stephanie Caswell, Mary Coulombe, Fernando R. Echavarria, Joseph Ferrante, Miles Henderson, Michael Hicks, Jan McAlpine, Lynette Poulton, Suzanne M. Willis, Tom Isle, Julie Jack, Scott Paul, Eli Austin Short
Venezuela	Isabel Carlota Bacalao-Romer, Luis Fernando Perez-Segnini, Judith Musso-Quintero
Zimbabwe	Machivenyika Tobias Mapuranga, Alfred Mutiwazuka, Musafare C. Nyamudahondo

States Members of the United Nations represented by observers

Algeria, Armenia, Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkey, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania.

Specialized agencies

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Intergovernmental organizations

Agence intergouvernementale de la francophonie

Non-governmental organizations

Roster

International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO)

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE FORUM AT ITS FIRST SESSION

Document symbol	Agenda item	Title
E/CN.17/IFF/1997/1	2	Provisional agenda
E/CN.17/IFF/1997/2	3	Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme of work and organizational modalities for the open-ended ad hoc Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development
E/CN.17/IFF/1997/3	2	Note by the Secretariat on the participation of intergovernmental organizations in the work of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests
E/CN.17/IFF/1997/L.1	6	Draft report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests on its first session

Annex III

LIST OF ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS IN RELATION TO THE WORK OF THE FORUM

Title	Sponsors	Tentative date and venue
International Workshop on Research and Information Needs in International Forest Processes	Austria and Indonesia, in collaboration with the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)	Austria, 1998